

Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)

Basic Instrument

[Convention](#) for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, 1994

Implementing Legislation

N/A, the United States is not a party.

Member Nations/Entities

Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Chinese Taipei

Cooperating Non Parties

Philippines, South Africa, and the European Community

Commission Headquarters

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Budget

The contributions to the annual budget from each Party are calculated on the following basis:

- (a) 30% of the budget shall be divided equally among all the Parties; and
- (b) 70% of the budget shall be divided in proportion to the nominal catches of southern bluefin tuna among all the Parties.

U.S. Representation

The United States has not historically participated in meetings of the CCSBT.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The Commission's objective is to ensure, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum utilization of the global southern bluefin tuna (SBT) fishery. The Commission also provides an internationally recognized forum for other countries/entities to actively participate in SBT issues.

In pursuit of this objective the CCSBT performs a number of functions. It:

- is responsible for setting a total allowable catch and its allocation among the members;
- considers and administers regulatory measures to meet Convention objectives;

- conducts and coordinates a scientific research program aimed at providing information to support the Commission's management objectives (the program is a mixture of member managed activities and activities managed directly by the CCSBT Secretariat);
- takes decisions to support and implement fishery management;
- provides a forum for the discussion of issues relevant to the conservation objectives of the Convention;
- acts as a coordination mechanism for member's activities in relation to the SBT fishery;
- fosters activities directed towards the conservation of ecologically related species (living marine species which are associated with the SBT fishery) and bycatch species;
- encourages nonmembers engaged in the fishery, to accede, apply for cooperating non-membership, or participate as observers in Commission activities;
- cooperates and liaises with other regional tuna fishery management organizations in areas of mutual interest.

B. Organizational Structure:

The CCSBT consists of a Commission composed of national sections of member nations and a Secretariat headed by an Executive Director.

Decisions of the Commission are taken by a unanimous vote of the Parties present at the Commission meeting. There are currently three subsidiary bodies: a scientific committee, a compliance committee, and a finance and administration committee.

Fisheries Conservation and CCSBT Management

Status of the Stock. The current spawning stock biomass (SSB) of southern bluefin tuna (SBT) remains very low (0.03-0.07 SSB₀). The 2014 stock assessment suggested that the SBT stock remains at a very low state; estimated to be 9% of the initial SSB, and below the level to produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY). However, the outlook for the stock is positive. The 2014 scientific aerial survey index of relative juvenile (2-4 year old) abundance is the highest value seen in the time series. Between 2010 and 2014 the index has shown more variation but with an increasing trend.

Management Procedure. At its eighteenth annual meeting in October 2011, the CCSBT agreed that a Management Procedure (MP) would be used to guide the setting of the southern bluefin tuna global total allowable catch (TAC) to ensure that the spawning stock biomass achieves the interim rebuilding target of 20% of the original spawning stock biomass. The Management Procedure set the TAC in three year periods starting in 2012. For the second (2015-2017) and subsequent three-year TAC setting periods, there will be a one year lag between TAC calculation and implementation of that TAC (i.e. the 2015-2017 TAC will be calculated in 2013).

The CCSBT has set the TAC for 2015-2017 at 14,647 tons, with the TAC for 2016-17 to be confirmed at the 21st meeting of the CCSBT in October 2014. The Management Procedure includes the following associated management parameters:

- The MP is tuned to a 70% probability of rebuilding the stock to the interim rebuilding target reference point of 20% of the original spawning stock biomass by 2035;
- The minimum TAC change (increase or decrease) is 100 tons;
- The maximum TAC change (increase or decrease) is 3,000 tons;
- The TAC will be set for three-year periods; and
- The national allocation of the TAC within each three-year period will be apportioned according to the CCSBT Resolution on the Allocation of the Global Total Allowable Catch.

The CCSBT also adopted the meta-rule process as the method for dealing with exceptional circumstances in the southern bluefin tuna fishery. The meta-rule process describes: (1) the process to determine whether exceptional circumstances exist; (2) the process for action; and (3) the principles for action.

Compliance. Compliance continues to be a major focus of the CCSBT annual meeting. In 2011, the CCSBT adopted a Compliance Plan that provides a framework for the CCSBT, Members and Cooperating Non-Members to achieve full compliance with CCSBT's conservation and management measures. The Compliance Plan includes a three-year action plan to address priority compliance risks. The action plan will be reviewed, and confirmed or updated every year. The CCSBT has also adopted three Compliance Policy Guidelines, including minimum performance requirements to meet CCSBT Obligations, corrective actions policy; and MCS information collection and sharing. The first three-year Action Plan finished in 2014. The CCSBT adopted an updated Compliance Action Plan for 2015 – 2017 in October 2014.

Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS). In 2004, the CCSBT established a list of fishing vessels over 24 meters in length which were approved to fish for SBT. The list was extended to include all vessels, regardless of size in 2005. The list is available on the CCSBT website. In 2008, the CCSBT established a list of authorized farms that are approved to operate for farming SBT. The CCSBT established a list of carrier vessels that are authorized to receive SBT at sea from large scale fishing vessels in 2009. In an effort to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, Members and Cooperating Non-Members will not allow the trade of SBT caught by fishing vessels and farms, or transshipped to carrier vessels that are not on these lists.

The CCSBT Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) came into effect immediately after the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Commission, on 17 October 2008. It requires CCSBT Members and Cooperating Non-Members to adopt and implement satellite-linked VMS for vessels fishing for SBT that complies with the IOTC, WCPFC, CCAMLR, or ICCAT VMS requirements according to the respective convention area in which the SBT fishing is being conducted. For fishing outside of these areas, the IOTC VMS requirements must be followed.

The CCSBT Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) came into effect on 1 January 2010 and replaced the Statistical Document Program. The CDS provides for tracking and validation of legitimate SBT product flow from catch to the point of first sale on domestic or export markets.

The CCSBT Transshipment monitoring program came into effect on 1 April 2009. The program applies to transshipments at sea from tuna longline fishing vessels with freezing capacity (referred to as "LSTLVs"). It requires, amongst other things, for carrier vessels that receive SBT transshipments at sea from LSTLVs to be authorized to receive such transshipments and for a CCSBT observer to be on board the carrier vessel during the transshipment. The CCSBT transshipment program is harmonized and operated in conjunction with those of ICCAT and IOTC to avoid duplication of the same measures. ICCAT or IOTC observers on a transshipment vessel that is authorized to receive SBT are deemed to be CCSBT observers provided that the CCSBT standards are met.

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